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ABSTRACT

This document is the annual student satisfaction survey completed by Howard Community College students in 2003.The respondents came from all different class sections. The survey was sent out to 2386 students and 1040 replied, which is a 44% response rate. The majority of respondents had chosen HCC due to its close proximity to home (37%) and their main objective is to transfer to a four-year school (58%). A majority (72%) of students worked at least part time and 54% used financial aid. The following are some of the key findings of the survey: (1) the highest rated services are admission services, library, HCC publications, and HCC websites; (2) class size, quality of instruction overall, quality of computer services, and quality of labs received the highest ratings on instructional topics; (3) the highest rated aspects of student life are cultural arts activities, galley/food service, physical education facility, and mid-day activities; and (4) majority of students felt safe on campus (80%) and agreed that HCC is helping them prepare for transferring (72%). The lowest rated survey items for full-time students were parking, student E-mail, and student newspaper. The document provides an overview of the previous year's survey results for comparison. (Contains 9 graphs and 11 tables.) (MZ)

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# *Student Satisfaction: The 2003 YESS Survey Results*

Howard Community College

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HOWARD COMMUNITY COLLEGE
You Can Get There From Here.

# Student Satisfaction: The 2003 YESS Survey Results

*Research Report Number 114*
*July 2003*

## *Background*

Students at Howard Community College (HCC) are asked every year to rate their satisfaction with college services, instruction, and other aspects of the campus environment and college life. The vehicle for collecting this information is the Yearly Evaluation of Services by Students (YESS) Survey. HCC has administered this survey since 1991 and uses the results to recognize units that provide high quality service, to set goals for the coming year, to allocate resources, and to focus improvement activities.

In the spring semester each year, students in randomly chosen class sections are asked to participate in the survey. Faculty members administer the survey in class or ask students to return it at a later class session. In 2003, 107 class sections were selected, and instructors in 90 sections returned completed surveys, for a section response rate of 84%. The number of students chosen to participate in the survey was 2386, and of those 1040 responded, for a student response rate of 44%. The 1040 YESS respondents represented 18% of the 5800 students enrolled at HCC in the spring of 2003. The respondent sample is large enough so that results of the survey can be generalized to the student body for spring 2003 with a 95% confidence level and within a 3% margin of error.

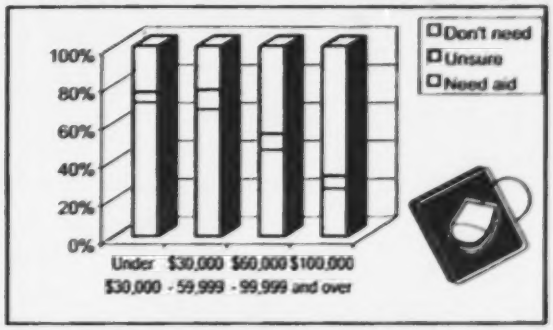
| *Student Characteristics* | *YESS 2003* (1040) | *All Spring Students* (5800) |
|---|---|---|
| Female | 62% | 60% |
| 19 & younger | 37% | 28% |
| 20 – 25 years old | 38% | 30% |
| White | 63% | 60% |
| African American/Black | 15% | 19% |
| Full-time students | 55% | 32% |
| Income under $30,000 | 26% | NA |
| Income over $100,000 | 26% | NA |
| Employed full time | 30% | NA |
| Employed part time | 42% | NA |

## *Survey Respondents*

On the whole, the respondents to this year's YESS Survey were similar to all students enrolled in the spring semester. There were, however, higher proportions of young and full-time students among the respondents than among all students. For example, students 25 and under made up three-fourths of the respondents, and 58% of all spring students. While full-time students made up 32% of spring students, 55% of the survey respondents were full time.

At HCC, data on students' income and employment status is only collected on the annual YESS Survey. Interestingly, the proportions in the highest and lowest income groups are the same: 26% with incomes under $30,000 and 26% with incomes over $100,000. These figures are down somewhat from last year: 31% and 33%, respectively. Just over half of the respondents (51%) had been at HCC for three or more semesters at the time of the survey. Two-thirds took classes during the day, and over half (55%) reported GPAs of 3.0 or higher. Most of the respondents (86%) said that English is their native language.

***Need for Financial Aid Within Different Income Categories***




Student respondents were asked if they need financial aid to meet their college expenses, and 46% reported that they need aid. Of that number, 22% are already getting it. As might be expected, the need for aid goes down as the household income goes up. It should be noted that 36% of respondents selected the "Don't know" option or did not answer the income question.

HCC's proximity and affordability were prime reasons for choosing to attend. As shown below, two goals in attending HCC accounted for 81% of respondents: transferring and obtaining an AA degree.

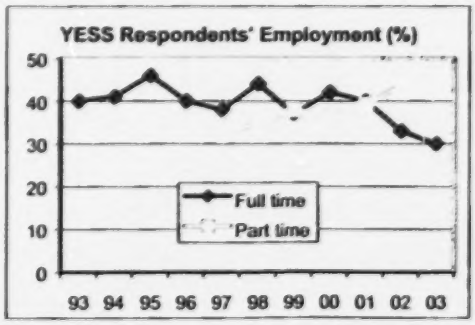
***Primary reasons for choosing HCC:***

| | |
|---|---|
| Proximity to home | 37% |
| Affordability | 20% |
| Ease of transferring | 13% |
| Quality of Education | 9% |

***Primary goals in attending HCC:***

| | |
|---|---|
| Transfer to four-year school | 58% |
| Obtain an AA degree | 23% |

Although most students work (72%), the majority of those (42%) do so part time. This year's 30% working full time is the lowest proportion in the last 10 years of the survey. Prior to 1999 a higher proportion of students worked full time. While undoubtedly related to higher proportions of younger students and perhaps to the current economy, this change in students' employment status bears watching to see if it indicates a trend.

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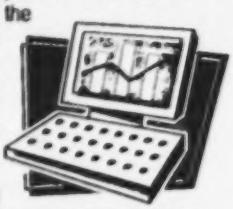
### *Students' Satisfaction with College Services*

This year, 22 college services were rated on a five-point scale ranging from "Very satisfied" (5) to "Very dissatisfied" (1). (The "Unaware of" option is not used in calculating means or percentages.) The highest rated services, all with ratings of 3.75 or over, are shown on the table below. The percent satisfied shown on the table indicates those respondents who gave ratings of four or five. On the whole, ratings were higher this year. (See full table set for all service ratings at: www.howardcc.edu/hcc/plan&eval/yess2003tab.pdf)

**HIGHEST RATED SERVICES**

| ☆☆☆☆☆ *Services (3.72 Overall)* | *Mean* | % *Satisfied* |
|---|---|---|
| Admissions services | 4.05 | 80% |
| Library | 4.03 | 77% |
| HCC publications | 4.01 | 78% |
| HCC Website | 3.95 | 75% |
| Bookstore | 3.93 | 75% |
| Test Center | 3.90 | 71% |
| Registration: in-person | 3.87 | 71% |
| Welcome Center | 3.79 | 63% |
| Cashiers' Office: Helpfulness | 3.78 | 64% |
| Learning Assistance Center | 3.78 | 60% |
| Registration: website | 3.75 | 59% |

With some slight adjustments in this top-rated group, it is essentially the same services that received high ratings last year. One notable difference is that website registration has surpassed the satisfaction levels of telephone registration. Eighteen of the 21 services rated both last year and this year rose in ratings. Some had slight increases, but five increased by 0.10 or more, with the 0.24 rise for the *Galley (Cafeteria)* at the forefront. The other services with 0.10 or greater increases were: *Registration: website, HCC's website, HCC publications,* and *Children's Learning Center.* Only three services went down in ratings, all by less than 0.10. The overall rating on the services section of the survey increased from 3.65 to 3.72, the same as in 2001. Please note that when looking at the "satisfied" percentages, it should not be assumed that the remaining students are dissatisfied, since the "neutral" or "3" rating often accounts for a substantial percentage of respondents.



On this year's survey, there were two services that were rated below 3.50: *Financial Aid amount (3.38),* and *Parking (2.53).*

In calculating the means cited above, the proportion of students who are **unaware** of a service (zero on the scale) is not used. It may be useful, however, to know the areas of which students were not aware. The eight services for which more than a quarter of respondents said they were "unaware" were: *Children's Learning Center, Financial Aid: amount of aid received, Personal Counseling, Learning Assistance Center, Financial Aid: helpfulness of counselors, Career/job Counseling, Orientation for new students,* and *Telephone registration.*

At the opposite end of the spectrum, the highest levels of awareness, each with 5% or fewer of students saying they were "unaware of" that service were: *Library, Publications, HCC's website, Parking, Admissions,* and *the Bookstore.*

### *Students' Satisfaction with Instructional Topics*

There are 12 items on the 2003 YESS Survey that deal with instructional topics. As in the past, all were rated above 3.50, as shown in the following table. *Class Size* again elicited the highest level of satisfaction. *Quality of instruction overall, Quality of computer services, Quality of labs,* and *Attitude of faculty toward students* were also highly rated.

**STUDENTS' RATINGS ON INSTRUCTIONAL TOPICS**

| *Survey Items (3.94 Overall)* | *Mean* | *%Satisfied* |
|---|---|---|
| Class size | 4.18 | 85% |
| Quality of instruction overall | 4.04 | 79% |
| Quality of computer services | 4.04 | 77% |
| Quality of labs | 4.03 | 75% |
| Attitude of faculty toward students | 4.02 | 77% |
| Quality of instruction in major | 3.96 | 72% |
| Availability/helpfulness of faculty | 3.94 | 73% |
| Diversity in curriculum | 3.94 | 77% |
| Access to up-to-date technology | 3.92 | 69% |
| Academic advice/assistance | 3.81 | 66% |
| Availability of courses: time/place | 3.66 | 63.3 |
| Academic support: counseling | 3.64 | 53.3 |

Of the 12 instructional topics on the survey, ten had higher ratings this year than last. One remained the same, and one (*Availability of courses at a convenient time/place)* went down. Six items rose by 0.10 or more: *Quality of labs, Quality of computer services, Diversity in the curriculum, Access to up-to-date technology,* and *Quality of instruction in major.* The overall rating on this section was 3.94, compared to last year's 3.86. The only instructional item with greater than 10% dissatisfaction was *Availability of courses at a convenient time/place* at 13%.

### *Students' Satisfaction with Student Life*

On this year's survey, students were asked to rate their satisfaction with nine aspects of student life, then to rate their level of involvement in or use of each. A high proportion of students claimed "low" involvement, with those responses ranging from 48% for *Food service* to 78% for *SGA.* In contrast, the proportions that claimed high involvement or use ranged from 5% for *Student newspaper* to 16% for *Food service.* When examined by level of involvement or use, those who have low involvement or use gave lower ratings than those with high or medium levels. For most of the items, a third or fewer claimed high or medium levels of involvement or use.

**RATINGS ON STUDENT LIFE**

| *Survey Items (3.19 Overall)* | *Mean* | *% Satisfied* |
|---|---|---|
| Cultural arts activities | 3.39 | 40% |
| Galley/food service | 3.31 | 41% |
| Physical Education facility | 3.24 | 34% |
| Mid-day activities (movies, etc.) | 3.21 | 32% |
| Sports/athletic programs | 3.10 | 29% |
| Student clubs | 3.04 | 27% |
| Student Government Assoc. | 3.04 | 25% |
| Student newspaper | 3.04 | 24% |
| Student E-mail | 3.03 | 28% |

### *Students' Satisfaction with their HCC Experience*

One section of the YESS Survey is *Your HCC Experience*, on which students rate thirteen items. These ratings and satisfaction levels are shown in the table below. For all items, satisfaction ratings were above 3.50. As was true last year, only two items had dissatisfaction levels over 10%: *Your Reading/English placement test scores accurately reflect your skill level* and *Your Math placement test scores accurately reflect your skill level.*

| Your HCC Experience | | |
|---|---|---|
| *Survey Items (3.89 Overall)* | *Mean* | *%Satisfied* |
| You feel safe on campus | 4.06 | 80% |
| Overall climate of diversity | 4.03 | 78% |
| HCC is helping you meet goals | 4.00 | 76% |
| Condition of buildings/grounds | 3.98 | 78% |
| You feel welcome on campus | 3.97 | 75% |
| Receiving an excellent education | 3.96 | 74% |
| HCC has met your expectations | 3.96 | 74% |
| HCC is preparing you for transfer | 3.95 | 72% |
| HCC is preparing you for a career | 3.86 | 67% |
| Attitude of HCC employees | 3.78 | 66% |
| Problem-solving skills have improved | 3.76 | 61% |
| Reading/English test reflects level | 3.63 | 58% |
| Math test scores reflect your level | 3.50 | 53% |

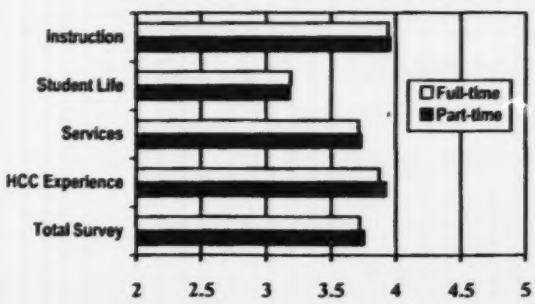
With these relatively high ratings on their HCC experience, it can be seen that for the most part, students feel safe and welcome at HCC. They also feel they are being helped to meet their goals, are being prepared for transfer and a career, and are getting an excellent education.

### *Ratings of part-time and full-time students*

Taking the survey's 56 standard items as a whole, the overall mean scores of full-time and part-time students differed little: 3.72 and 3.75, respectively. Yet part-time students gave fifteen items ratings of 4.00 or higher, compared to seven items over 4.00 for full-timers. Across all sections of the survey there were 11 areas in which there were significant differences in ratings between full- and part-time students. The highest and lowest rated areas by each group are shown below.

| | |
|---|---|
| *Highest Rated Survey Items* | |
| Class size | Class size |
| Library | Attitude of faculty |
| Quality of computer services | Overall Quality of Instruction |
| *Lowest Rated Survey Items* | |
| Student newspaper | SGA |
| Student E-mail | Student clubs |
| Parking | Parking |

**Mean Survey Section Ratings by Enrollment**

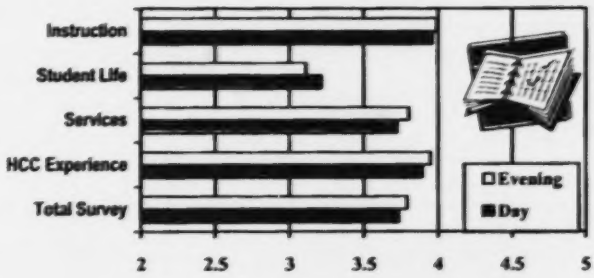



### *Ratings of day and evening students*

Evening students gave a higher overall mean rating on the 56 survey items: 3.79, compared to day students' 3.73. The only section of the survey for which day students gave higher ratings was *Student Life*. For twenty-six of the items, differences between day and evening students were 0.10 or greater, with ten having statistically significant differences. Of those, the only items for which one or both are rated 3.50 or below were: *Mid-day activities* and *Galley food service*, both with full-time students giving higher ratings.

| Day Students | Evening Students |
|---|---|
| *Highest Rated Survey Items* | |
| Class size | Attitude of faculty |
| You feel safe on campus | Admissions services |
| Computer services | Class size |
| Quality of labs | Quality of instruction |
| *Lowest Rated Survey Items* | |
| Student clubs | Student clubs |
| SGA | SGA |
| Student newspaper | Sports/athletics |
| Student E-mail | Parking |
| Parking | |

**Mean Survey Section Ratings by Schedule**




### *Ratings by racial/ethnic group*

African American/Black students gave generally more positive ratings than either White or Asian students. Of the 56 standard items on the survey, African American/Black students had an overall survey rating of 3.80, compared to 3.74 for White students, and 3.67 for Asian students. African American/Black students gave 21 items ratings of 4.0 or higher; White students rated 12 items that highly; and Asian students gave only two items ratings of 4.0 or higher. African American/Black students gave higher overall ratings than the other two groups on each section of the survey except *Student Life*. As was true last year, their ratings on that section were the lowest of the three racial/ethnic groups.

| | | Asian Students |
|---|---|---|
| *Highest Rated Survey Items* | | |
| Computer services | Class size | Class size |
| Quality of labs | Attitude of faculty | Quality of labs |
| Class size | Safety on campus | Admissions |
| Library | Quality of instruction | Diversity in curriculum |
| *Lowest Rated Survey Items* | | |
| Student Clubs | Student E-mail | Galley/food service |
| Student newspaper | SGA | SGA |
| Parking | Parking | Parking |



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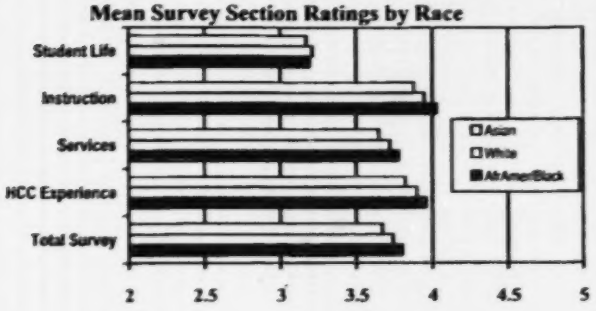
The differences in overall ratings on the survey sections by race follow past trends in ratings by the three groups, with African American/Black students giving the highest ratings and Asians the lowest.

**Mean Survey Section Ratings by Race**




### *Comparison to 2002 YESS Survey ratings*

While last year's YESS Survey ratings dipped, this year's rose, with 47 of the 55 items rated both years increasing. Although some increases were slight, fully 22 were higher by 0.10 or more. Ten of those were up by 0.20 or more. Only one item, *Academic support: retention counseling*, decreased by 0.10 or more. The *Student Life* section of the survey had the most dramatic decreases last year and the most dramatic increases this year.

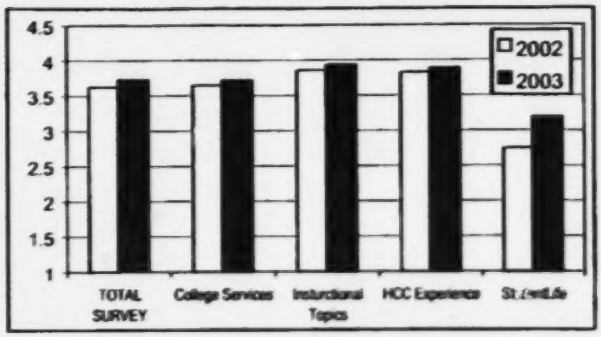
| CHANGES IN YESS RATINGS 2002-2003 | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| *YESS Survey Items* | *Mean* 2003 | 2002 | *Difference* |
| *GREATEST INCREASES* | | | |
| Physical Education facility | 3.24 | 2.69 | .55 |
| Cultural arts activities | 3.39 | 2.85 | .54 |
| Mid-day activities | 3.21 | 2.68 | .53 |
| Galley/food service | 3.31 | 2.79 | .52 |
| Email account | 3.03 | 2.56 | .47 |
| SGA | 3.04 | 2.59 | .45 |
| Student clubs | 3.04 | 2.62 | .42 |
| Sports/athletic programs | 3.10 | 2.71 | .39 |
| Student newspaper | 3.04 | 2.66 | .38 |
| Galley (Cafeteria) | 3.66 | 3.42 | .24 |
| Registration: website | 3.75 | 3.58 | .17 |
| Quality of labs | 4.03 | 3.88 | .15 |
| Condition of buildings/grounds | 3.98 | 3.83 | .15 |

### *Conclusions*

HCC has been collecting student satisfaction data for more than a decade. The results of the YESS Survey have been used to provide an overview of student satisfaction with the quality of services, instruction, the college environment, and student life. YESS Survey ratings give the student perception of areas that are providing stellar service and of those that do not measure up to student expectations.

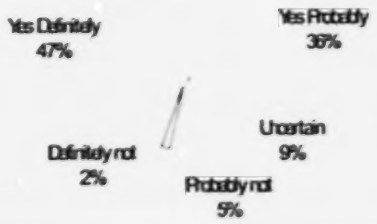
This year's survey results were mostly positive. In addition to the good news that most items' ratings increased over last year, another piece of good news is that 46 of the 56 survey items (82%) had ratings of 3.50 or higher. The overall rating on the 56 items was 3.73, up from last year's 3.63. As was true last year, the highest levels of satisfaction are with *Instructional Topics* and *Your HCC Experience*, which had overall ratings of 3.94 and 3.89, respectively. The rating on *College Services* was a respectable 3.72. Only one area on the survey, *Student Life*, had an overall rating below 3.50, yet its rating of 3.19 was up by 0.44 over last year. As mentioned above, the ratings on the *Student Life* section are greatly influenced by the level of use or involvement in those areas. The greater the level of involvement or use is, the higher the rating.

**Overall Ratings on the Sections of the YESS**



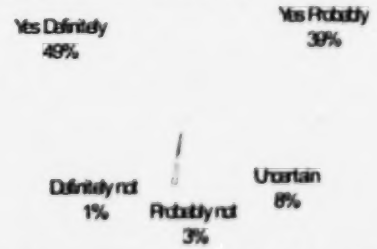

A positive finding from the survey is the relatively high proportions of students who say they would enroll again at HCC and recommend HCC to friends or relatives. Respondents were asked if they would enroll again at HCC, and 83% said they definitely or probably would.

***If you had it to do over again, would you enroll at HCC?***




When asked if they would recommend HCC to their friends or relatives, 88% of the respondents replied positively. This may be compared to a recent national survey (AACC's *Faces of the Future* National Community College Survey, 2002) that found 77% of students agreed or strongly agreed that they would recommend their community college to friends and relatives.

***Would you recommend HCC to your friends or relatives?***




At HCC a cut-off score of below 3.50 on the five-point satisfaction scale has customarily been used to flag survey items for further scrutiny. These may be areas that need to become the focus of additional resources, customer service workshops, better publicity and public relations, or other improvement strategies. In addition to examining mean ratings, some valuable information can be gained from using the same five-point scale and looking at the proportions of respondents who are satisfied or dissatisfied. On the following table, the "Satisfied" designation combines the fours and fives on the scale, while the "Dissatisfied" combines the ones and twos.

| 2003 YESS SURVEY RESULTS<br>HIGHEST PERCENT SATISFIED | |
|---|---|
| Class size | 85% |
| Admissions services | 80% |
| You feel safe on campus | 80% |
| Quality of instruction overall | 79% |
| HCC publications | 78% |
| Library | 78% |
| Overall climate of diversity | 78% |
| Condition of buildings/grounds | 78% |
| Quality of computer services | 77% |
| Attitude of faculty toward students | 77% |
| Diversity in the curriculum | 77% |
| HCC is helping you meet your goals | 76% |
| HCC's website | 75% |
| Bookstore | 75% |
| Quality of labs | 75% |
| You feel welcome on this campus | 75% |
| **HIGHEST PERCENT DISSATISFIED** | |
| Parking accommodations | 51% |
| Student clubs | 19% |
| Student Government Association | 19% |
| Student newspaper | 18% |
| Sports/athletic programs | 18% |
| Galley/food service | 16% |
| Physical Education facility (Gym) | 16% |
| Financial Aid Services: amount | 15% |
| Math scores reflect your skill level | 15% |
| Mid-day activities (speakers, movies, etc.) | 15% |
| Availability of courses: convenient time/place | 13% |
| Your Campus Cruiser Email account | 13% |
| Reading/English scores reflect your skill level | 11% |
| Financial Aid Services: helpfulness | 10% |
| Cultural arts activities (art gallery, plays, etc.) | 10% |

The striking difference between this year's and last year's YESS Survey results can be seen in the comparison of survey items with satisfaction levels of 75% or higher. Last year there were five survey items that had satisfaction levels that high; this year there are 16. This year there are 15 items with dissatisfaction rates of 10% or higher, last year there were 18. Last year's results seemed to be a temporary downward fluctuation and were not indicative of a trend, since this year's findings are similar to past years.

Students are Howard Community College's most important stakeholders. Continuing to monitor their satisfaction and their progress toward their goals, is a vital means of ensuring that students derive the maximum benefit from attending HCC. The annual YESS Survey is one tool for assessing student satisfaction and eliciting their perceptions on the quality of their HCC experience.

[To make inquiries about this report or to request a set of tables with detailed ratings from the 2003 YESS Survey, please contact Barbara Liviratos, Office of Planning, Research, and Organizational Development, Howard Community College, by phone at 410-772-4707 or by E-mail at Blivieratos@howardcc.edu]

| Item | Rank | YESS 2003 SURVEY ITEMS | MEAN |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 1 | **Class size** | **4.18** |
| 2 | 2 | **You feel safe on campus** | **4.06** |
| 3 | 3 | **Admissions services** | **4.05** |
| 4 | 4 | **Quality of instruction overall** | **4.04** |
| 5 | 4 | **Quality of computer services** | **4.04** |
| 6 | 5 | **Library** | **4.03** |
| 7 | 5 | **Quality of labs** | **4.03** |
| 8 | 5 | **Overall climate of diversity** | **4.03** |
| 9 | 6 | **Attitude of faculty toward students** | **4.02** |
| 10 | 7 | **HCC publications** | **4.01** |
| 11 | 8 | **HCC is helping you meet your goals** | **4.00** |
| 12 | 9 | Condition of buildings/grounds | 3.98 |
| 13 | 10 | You feel welcome on this campus | 3.97 |
| 14 | 11 | Quality of instruction in major | 3.96 |
| 15 | 11 | Receiving an excellent education | 3.96 |
| 16 | 11 | HCC has met your expectations | 3.96 |
| 17 | 12 | HCC's website | 3.95 |
| 18 | 12 | Preparation for transfer | 3.95 |
| 19 | 13 | Availability/helpfulness of faculty | 3.94 |
| 20 | 13 | Diversity in the curriculum | 3.94 |
| 21 | 14 | Bookstore | 3.93 |
| 22 | 15 | Access to up-to-date technology | 3.92 |
| 23 | 16 | Test Center | 3.90 |
| 24 | 17 | Registration: in-person | 3.87 |
| 25 | 18 | HCC is preparing you for a career | 3.86 |
| 26 | 19 | Academic advice/assistance | 3.81 |
| 27 | 20 | Welcome Center | 3.79 |
| 28 | 21 | Cashier's Office: helpfulness | 3.78 |
| 29 | 21 | Learning Assistance Center | 3.78 |
| 30 | 21 | Attitude of HCC employees | 3.78 |
| 31 | 22 | Problem-solving skills improved | 3.76 |
| 32 | 23 | Registration: website | 3.75 |
| 33 | 24 | Counseling: personal | 3.71 |
| 34 | 25 | Tuition payment procedures | 3.70 |
| 35 | 26 | Orientation for new students | 3.68 |
| 36 | 27 | Galley (Cafeteria) | 3.66 |
| 37 | 27 | Availability of courses: time/place | 3.66 |
| 38 | 28 | Registration: telephone | 3.64 |
| 39 | 28 | Academic support: retention counseling | 3.64 |
| 40 | 29 | Counseling: career/job | 3.63 |
| 41 | 29 | Reading/English placement | 3.63 |
| 42 | 30 | Existing health programs* | 3.55 |
| 43 | 31 | Children's Learning Center | 3.53 |
| 44 | 32 | Financial Aid: helpfulness | 3.52 |
| 45 | 33 | Security services | 3.51 |
| 46 | 34 | Math placement | 3.50 |
| 47 | 35 | Cultural arts activities | 3.39 |
| 48 | 36 | Financial Aid: amount of aid | 3.38 |
| 49 | 37 | Galley/food service | 3.31 |
| 50 | 38 | Physical Education facility (Gym) | 3.24 |
| 51 | 39 | Mid-day activities | 3.21 |
| 52 | 40 | Sports/athletic programs | 3.10 |
| 53 | 41 | Student clubs | 3.04 |
| 54 | 41 | Student Government Association | 3.04 |
| 55 | 41 | Student newspaper | 3.04 |
| 56 | 42 | Student Email | 3.03 |
| 57 | 43 | Parking accommodations | 2.53 |

*In addition to the 56 standard items, this was a "special one-time" item.



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